1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
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Ngaoho

Ngaoho (*Caesalpinia bonduc*) is almost extinct. According to Knoche (123, p. 123) it was used as a medicine. Its fibers were resorted to for tying together pieces of wood in canoes or fastening poles of hut frames. Fuentes (208, vol. 2, p. 72) says that the natives listed *ngaoho* as a plant introduced by their ancestors, but both Skottsberg and my informants consider it to be indigenous.

Moss

Para (*Campylopus turficola*) is a green moss which covers the lakes of the craters. It is mentioned by Routledge as a *Sphagnum*. Skottsberg (208, vol. 2, p. 501) says explicitly that he has not found *Sphagnum* in the lake, but in its place a species of *Campylopus* which forms a peat. The peat was gathered, washed and dried to be used in the preservation of water. The moss was also used to stop the chinks of canoes.

Seaweed

Rollin, one of the officers under La Pérouse (130, vol. 2, p. 240), noticed that some of the Easter Islanders were eating "a species of marine *fucus*, which they gather on the shore." The names of the edible seaweed are *miritonu, miritonu mama, auke,* and *ringaringa-pea*. Nowadays only children enjoy eating seaweed.

Fire

Although the use of matches became general on the island after 1880, the ancient method of making fire by rubbing is still remembered. From what I could learn, *hau* wood (*Triumfetta semitriloba*) was the best for making fire, but a harder wood might have been used (215, p. 471). A rubbing stick preserved in the Anthropological Museum, Berkeley (1142), is made of a light material, probably *hau*. It is 185 mm. long and the tapering end is slightly curved upward. The operator, sitting on the floor, held the stick with both hands and, pressing hard, rubbed it along a longitudinal groove in another piece of *hau* or paper mulberry. The hearth was probably held in place with the foot or by an assistant. Friction ignited some fibers placed at the end of the groove as tinder. The whole operation took between five and ten minutes. *Hau* wood is soft and its particles smolder and glow easily. Therefore, it is very unlikely that the natives kept permanent fires, attended by special watchers, in order to spare themselves the trouble of producing fire by the usual method (56).

During our trip round the island the natives who accompanied us always found sufficient fuel for their fires. They gathered small twigs and dry branches or cut branches of the *miro-tahiti* which grows on several points of

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372 the island. Sheep dung was also used. In ancient times, when the population was far more dense, the fuel problem must have been serious. Yet the natives did not seem to worry about it. Cook (53, vol. 1, p. 292) saw twelve fires burning at the same place morning and evening. Natives burned the straps or tops of sugar cane, plantain heads, and probably branches from the numerous shrubs scattered about the island.

OVEN

354 Before the introduction of European cooking utensils, natives cooked (*ootu*) all their food in underground ovens (*umu*), similar to those in other parts of Polynesia. Wherever remains of settlements are found there are ancient ovens also.

The ovens are pentagonal in shape, formed of five slabs, generally curbs taken from some house. The slabs are buried in the ground to varying depths and project only 10 or 15 cm. above the surface enclosing a space 2 feet in diameter. My principal informant [801] called my attention to the fact that the stones of the ovens always numbered five or seven and that an odd number of stones was imposed by superstition. I noticed only one oven with six slabs on the island. A screen or covered roof protected the oven from the wind (130, vol. 2, p. 256). This type of oven is no longer used.

Modern natives make earth ovens only when they are in camp or preparing a banquet.

354 A hole about 2 feet deep is dug, on the bottom of which are placed large stones
252 covered with grass. On this first layer, stones the size of the fist are piled up in a heap with small branches, scraps of wood (*hukahuka*) and grass. Fire is set to the pile (*ka te umu* or *puhi te umu*). The glowing stones are evenly fitted (*uru*) and spread with two sticks handled like tongs. The food—meat, sweet potatoes, yams, taro—is placed (*tao*) in the oven on banana or ti leaves to prevent burning. More hot stones are spread against or above (*puapua*) the leaves protecting the food. Formerly bundles were covered (*pengopengo*) with grass (*tauetu*), today with a sack. Soil is shoveled (*tanu hai oone*) over the pit. After 2 hours the food is generally considered sufficiently cooked and is removed (*maoa*). To cook food well is *kukokope a te umu*. The entrails of the animals are roasted (*katui*) on the glowing stones of the *umu*.

PREPARATION OF FOOD

252 Cooked food is never pounded on Easter Island, and probably never was in the past, since no food pounders have ever been found there. Breadfruit and taro are the staples in other parts of Polynesia and are mashed. Breadfruit does not grow on Easter Island and taro is far less important in diet than sweet potatoes which are never pounded. Pounding food requires a great deal of water and water has always been scarce on Easter Island.

231 Formerly the natives were reluctant to shed the blood of any animal. This may have had a religious background but it is more probable that the natives simply did not want to waste any blood. Chickens were strangled by
252 twisting the neck; larger animals, such as goats and dogs, were suffocated by burying the head in a hole or in smoke. The hair was then singed and, with-

10: Cooke D-5 (1886) 1899
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In place of plank floors the bare earth is strewn with dried bulrushes and grass to the depth of several inches, and as this litter is rarely renewed, the result is obvious. Occasionally a bunk may be found knocked up at one end of the single apartment of which the house consists, or, as in the more pretentious houses, a square bedstead may be seen, built of planed, unpainted wood, with a wild attempt at scroll carving about the head and foot boards. Chairs and tables are unknown luxuries.

The same house is often occupied by several families, or by several generations of the same family, but as the individuals composing these are never very numerous there is no overcrowding.

A few of the more ordinary cooking utensils may occasionally be seen, but as a rule the natives, as is generally the case among the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands, prepare their food in stone ovens in the following manner: A circular excavation is made in the earth outside of the dwelling, several feet in diameter and a foot or two in depth, which is then neatly lined with a porous stone of some sort. Other stones are loosely laid in, and a quantity of dry wood or brush of any kind, with more stones, piled on. The wood is then set on fire, and, when the stones have become sufficiently heated, the loose ones are taken out, and the brands and cinders removed, leaving the lining of heated stones intact. Over these is then spread a layer of banana, breadfruit, or other large leaves to keep the food from contact with ashes. The food, taro, yams, sweet potatoes, fowl, short, or "long-pig," or whatever else there may be, previously prepared for cooking, is then placed on the layer of leaves, piece by piece, until all are in position, when the mound of food is carefully covered over with several thicknesses of large green leaves to prevent any dirt from falling in among the edibles. The heated stones, previously removed, are then placed in position all over the mass and finally a thick layer of fine, dry earth, ashes, and cinders is piled over all, these being for the purpose of retaining the heat. In from two to three or four hours the baking is finished, and, barring the "long pig," perhaps, a more healthful and toothsome method of preparing and cooking food, when superintended by an expert native Samoan *chef*, for example, could not, in the estimation of the writer, who has had opportunities for judging, be devised. The thought suggests itself here that the "clambakes" of our Atlantic States are a feeble imitation of this style of cooking among the islanders.

As wood or solid fuel of any kind is a most rare commodity on Rapa Nui the natives are compelled to use brush, twigs, and trash cast up on their island by the sea, anything, in fact, of an inflammable nature which they can pick up. They even economize the dried droppings of the cattle, as the Arab does those of his camel, for this purpose, and I saw great basketfuls of these carefully stowed away in their houses for future use.

They have no fixed time for eating, and while their *meals*, as may be